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IDENTICAL LETTERS DATED 31 DECEMBER 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 30 December 1997 from His Excellency Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, concerning the determination of the United States to undertake wide-ranging acts of aggression against Iraq, in which it will use prohibited weapons. The Minister also calls for the United Nations to meet its responsibilities and stop this aggression.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Identical letters dated 30 December 1997 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

I should like to draw your attention to the continuing military preparations being made by the United States of America in the Arabian Gulf region. These include the stockpiling of various types of matériel and weapons, even internationally prohibited weapons, with a view to carrying out wide-ranging acts of aggression against Iraq. This constitutes a serious threat to peace in the region and to international peace and security.

The United States Administration attempts to justify this aggressive behaviour by claiming that Iraq is in possession of prohibited weapons, and that these weapons are concealed in the Presidential People's Palaces. They are using these false allegations as a pretext for bombarding those palaces with prohibited weapons, in order to persuade the world that such weapons do exist in Iraq, and in order to find a way out of the predicament in which they have landed themselves.

The material facts prove that Iraq has no chemical or biological weapons. The United States knows this better than any other country, its nationals controlling as they do the Special Commission, its secretariat, and the inspection teams which have been operating in Iraq for more than six years.

Iraq expects that this prodigious military mobilization in the region and the political and media escalation will lead to United States military strikes against the Presidential People's Palaces and other sites connected with the infrastructure of the Iraqi economy, particularly since the United States is documented as having previously employed prohibited weapons such as depleted uranium, which its forces used during the 30-Power aggression against Iraq in 1991.

The primary goal of all the turmoil created by the United States Administration, its attempts to mislead and to spread disinformation about Iraq and its political leadership, is to distract international public attention from the truth about the inhumane policy pursued by that Administration in maintaining the oppressive sanctions which have been imposed on Iraq for more than seven years, despite the fact that the justifications for those sanctions no longer exist, and regardless of Iraq's compliance with all its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions.

This aggressive behaviour also constitutes a further attempt by the United States to escape international pressure on its Administration to change its attitude towards the issue of Iraq in the Security Council and acknowledge Iraq's achievements in implementing the provisions of section C of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) and meeting the requirements of paragraph 22 of that resolution.

While bringing Iraq's concerns to your attention, I enclose a copy of the statement made on this matter on 26 December 1997 by the official spokesman for the Iraqi leadership.

I should also like to inform you that Iraq holds the United States of America entirely and internationally responsible for the acts of aggression, intimidation and provocation which it carries out against Iraq, and for their consequences, regardless of the arguments used to justify them. The Government of the Republic of Iraq reserves its right under international law to determine an appropriate response to this aggression and to seek compensation for the damage it causes.

I hope that the Security Council will meet its responsibilities as laid down in the Charter with regard to maintaining international peace and security, and endeavour to prevent the aggression to which the United States is determined to subject Iraq.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Iraq

Enclosure

The statement made by the official spokesman

On 26 December 1997, the official spokesman for the joint meeting of the Revolution Command Council and the Iraqi leadership of the Arab Baath Socialist Party made the following statement:

The United States, which controls the Special Commission, is very well aware, after more than six and a half years of Special Commission activity, and the thousands of inspection and verification operations that it has carried out, that Iraq is completely free of chemical and biological weapons.

Nevertheless, the United States still persists in its false allegations that such weapons have been concealed. It is spreading false charges that this concealment has been effected in the Presidential People's Palaces, while at the same time it is building up huge military stockpiles in the region.

The most likely outcome of this campaign will be United States military strikes against these and other sites. Weapons of mass destruction that contain chemical and biological elements will be used with a view to enabling the United States to claim, once the strikes have been carried out, that its allegations were well-founded.

It is essential to be on guard against these malicious United States plots, which have been confirmed by well-informed sources. The United States has already used prohibited weapons such as depleted uranium during the 30-Power aggression of 1991.

The United States must recognize that its plots and manoeuvres cannot succeed, and that the essential issue, that of the lifting of sanctions, will be achieved. It must also recognize and accept the fact that the sanctions cannot be maintained indefinitely, so that the region may live in security and stability.

Baghdad, 26 December 1997